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USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · OFFICE OF INFORMATION · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

March 1964

No. 5

Come To The Fair! Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson will open a Food and Home Fair for Consumers at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Washington, D.C., April 14. Agriculture Secretary Orville L. Freeman will officiate at the opening and will participate in discussions with consumer groups who attend. "The Fair will give consumers an opportunity to see the wide range of USDA consumer services and safeguards," he said in announcing the event. Mrs. Esther Peterson, Special Presidential Assistant for Consumer Affairs, and Mrs. John G. Lee, Chairman of the President's Consumer Advisory Council, will also participate in the opening.

April 15 will be another outstanding day. Secretary Freeman will give USDA's "Report to Consumers." A panel will discuss "What The Consumer Wants to Know." Panel members will be Mrs. Peterson; Mrs. Lee; Michael J. O'Connor, Executive Director of the Super Market Institute; and George L. Mehren, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture.

Colorful exhibits and demonstrations by specialists will dramatize USDA consumer services, such as new foods and fabrics from USDA research; an energy-saving kitchen; new flowers and gardening tips; how to benefit from food grades and inspection, plus many other shopping tips; how to use pesticides wisely; recreation; and many others. The Fair, in the patio of USDA's Administration Building, will be open to the public from April 14 to April 30. For details or special tour arrangements, write Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

SMART SHOPPERS

Beef Supplies Abundant. By direction of Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman, the Department is participating in an intensified industry-Government drive to call consumer attention to the abundant supplies of high quality beef now available. He said the drive is another of the actions being taken by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to encourage consumption of the heavy supplies of beef resulting from the large volume of fed cattle being marketed.

Wise April Buys. Beef is the buy-word for April. Other plentiful include canned corn, canned ripe olives, eggs, dry beans, cottage cheese and rice, USDA says. When foods are plentiful they're usually at peak-of-quality and are favorably priced.



You Can Be Pennywise and Pound Foolish. Meats with the lowest price tag per pound aren't necessarily your best buy. Some have more bone, gristle, and fat than others. That means fewer servings per pound, USDA family economists point out. Expect only one to two servings per pound from short ribs, spareribs, shank, brisket, plate, breast of lamb or veal because all have considerable bone and gristle. There are two to three servings per pound from whole or end cuts of beef round, veal leg or shoulder, ham with bone in, also steaks, chops, or roasts from loin, rump, or rib sections. All these have medium amount of bone. But you get a bonus from meat with no bone! Figure four to five servings per pound from ground meat, boneless stew meats; liver or other boneless meats.

FABRIC FACTS

S-t-r-e-t-c-h Cottons Reach Men. There's something really new in spring styles for men -- all-cotton stretch shirts and slacks. Cotton can be given its stretch ability through a USDA-developed process. The result? Clothes have good fit and retain their shape for smart appearance and comfort. Actually the stretch cotton invasion into the men's wear field is just beginning. Early announcements indicate that two companies will market dress shirts of stretch-cotton oxford cloth this spring. And a third will be ready with men's slacks in cotton stretch fabrics. By fall you can expect a variety of stretch clothes for men in the stores. Dozens of firms are now testing stretch cotton for socks, sport shirts, underwear, sport jackets, and hunting jackets.

Sew Like A Pro. Hesitate to tackle a suit or coat for fear it won't have that really well-tailored look? Then make a trial coat or suit jacket of muslin just like the pattern, USDA clothing specialists say. Necessary changes can be made in the inexpensive muslin. Use it as your pattern or transfer the changes to your paper pattern. USDA specialists have simplified professional tailoring techniques and tell about them in two publications, "How To Tailor A Woman's Suit--HG-20" and "Fitting Coats and Suits--HG-11." You'll find a helpful table of fitting problems and solutions in "Fitting Coats and Suits." For copies, send postcard to Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

FOOD FACTS

Potato Chips--As You Like 'Em. Most of us like our potato chips light-colored and crisp. But just how can the farmer or processor tell beforehand which potatoes will produce that kind of chips? USDA marketing researchers have found the answer--best potatoes for chips are the ones planted early and harvested within a few days after the potato vines are killed. Means a bigger yield, too. So not only will you get more of the kind of chips you like best--you may get 'em cheaper because of cost savings from the greater yields. For details, write for Press Release 613-64.

More and Better Food for 379,000. As of February 1, 1964, approximately 379,000 people in 40 counties and 3 major U.S. cities--Pittsburg, Detroit, and St. Louis--were enjoying more and better food through USDA's Pilot Food Stamp program. For the first time in many months, mothers in low-income families were able to serve their children fresh milk, fruits, and vegetables. Low-income families certified as eligible by State and local welfare agencies use the money they normally spend for food to buy Federal food coupons. In return, they get coupons worth more. They contribute on the average \$6 toward every \$10 worth of coupons they receive. They spend food coupons just like money at authorized retail stores for any U.S. produced food.

NUTRITION FACTS

Older Men Eat Better Than Women. Most older folks select a nutritionally good diet. But some aren't eating proper foods for good health, USDA nutritionists find. And more women than men have poor diets. Most common shortages are in calcium and ascorbic acid. Calcium builds bones, helps blood clot, helps muscles and nerves react normally. Ascorbic acid strengthens blood vessel walls, helps you resist infection, and helps in healing. Other nutrients which may be low are thiamine and riboflavin. USDA nutritionists say these diet faults could be corrected if older people ate more milk and cheese to increase calcium and riboflavin, more citrus fruits and leafy greens to increase ascorbic acids, more bread and cereals to increase thiamine and riboflavin. More meat would also help raise the B-vitamins.

PLANTS AND INSECTS

Oh, Those Souvenirs! Ever wonder just what Americans bring home when they travel abroad? Well, look what USDA plant quarantine inspectors at New Orleans, La., reported in a recent, routine 10-day period: In their handbags, air passengers from Central America had a total of 83 mombin fruits, 19 guava fruits, 24 peaches, 3 apples, 1 cashew fruit, 1 sapote seed, 1/2 pound of faba beans, 5 avacados, 1 plant, and 6 plant cuttings. One passenger had 16 joints of sugarcane in a suitcase. USDA plant inspectors carefully check travelers' baggage to prevent prohibited plants and fruits from coming into the U.S. This curbs the spread of foreign insects and plant diseases into the country. The plants they save may be our own!

NEW PUBLICATION

Freezing Tips for Meat and Fish. How long will ground beef stored in your home freezer keep its quality? USDA family economists recommend you use it within two to three months. Use bacon in less than a month. Beef roasts and steaks hold quality longer--eight to twelve months. For best storage, your freezer should maintain a temperature of zero or lower. If the temperature's higher, or constantly changes, food loses quality and nutritive value. So check your freezer. For more tips on cutting, wrapping, and freezing meat or fish, send postcard for new illustrated USDA booklet "Freezing Meat and Fish in the Home--HG-93", to Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

GARDENING

Best Flower Seed Buy--F₁ Hybrids. Got the gardening urge? If you want more and better flowers this year, look for new varieties listed as F₁ hybrids. USDA plant specialists say F₁ varieties are usually more uniform in size and more vigorous than the open pollinated plants they come from. Hybrid seeds will likely cost more, but the specialists say your money's well spent for the bonus blooms you get. It won't pay to save seeds from the F₁ hybrids, though. Second generation reverts to characteristics of the original plants.

Seed Saving is No Real Saving. You're probably in for a disappointment if you plant flower seeds held over from last year. Under ordinary household conditions most seeds lose a lot of their vitality, USDA plant specialists caution. They'll probably germinate slowly and produce poor seedlings. Smartest thing to do is buy seeds as near planting time as possible. For best results buy 'em no more than 3 months ahead.

NEW PRODUCT

Powdered Grapefruit Juice. Ready for market testing to see how consumers like it, is powdered grapefruit juice with a remarkably fresh juice flavor. Developed by USDA scientists and the Florida Citrus Commission, the experimental powder dissolves in cold water with just a stir or two. It requires little or no refrigeration, making it attractive for export.

RECREATION

Want A Bargain Vacation? Plan now for a camping trip in one of the 154 National Forests. Most campgrounds are free--you just furnish tent, sleeping and cooking equipment, says the U.S. Department of Agriculture which administers the National Forests. And there's one--sometimes several National Forests--within a day's drive of practically any point in the U.S. Besides camping, you can fish, hike, hunt in season, sight-see, picnic, or just relax. In some, you can go horseback riding, swimming, boating, or take backpack and saddle trips to wilderness areas. Cabins and other lodging facilities are available from private owners within the National Forest areas. Regular season is May 30 through Labor Day weekend, but longer in southern states. For details, write Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

39 Million Acres Leased for Recreation. Have any of the groups to which you belong considered leasing private farm land as a recreation retreat for members? A recent USDA survey shows more than 51,800 organized groups, representing 8.9 million members, are now leasing 39 million acres. Groups include sportsmen's clubs, youth and church groups, employee associations, ski clubs, and recreation associations. Non-profit civic or employee groups in areas of not more than 2500 people, who can't get credit elsewhere, can get long term loans through USDA to develop recreational facilities on land they are planning to lease or buy. In 1962 USDA was authorized to make these recreation-use loans for land unsuitable, or unneeded, for crop cultivation. To get details for your group, write Farmers Home Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

HOUSING

Milestone in Adequate Housing for Elderly. A Grove City, Minnesota, citizens association has received the nation's first loan made to a non-profit group for building rural housing to be rented to senior citizens. Some 260 residents of the farming community about 75 miles from Minneapolis raised their share of funds by subscription, then got a \$182,000 loan from the USDA to build 31 apartments so senior citizens can stay in their home community. Grove City officials have agreed to furnish water, power and sewer lines as well as roads. Local churches, civic and veteran's groups have pledged support. Several groups plan to provide regular entertainment and other recreational services. The project will include a social center and even a small park. To find how non-profit organizations or consumer cooperatives in your area can finance housing for senior citizens, write Farmers Home Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

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